Implementation of an Electronic Health Record System for Use Inhumanitarian Emergencies, Disaster Response, and Conflict Zones

Sarah D Draugelis BS[1], Erik C Brown MD, PhD[1,2], Sean G Smith MSc., BBA, BSN[1,3], Philip Sutherland MD[1,4], George A Yendewa MD, MPH&TM[5,6], Amir M Mohareb MD[7,8] and Donald A Donahue Jr. DHEd, MBA, MSJ[1,9]

[1]Team fEMR, St Claire Shores, MI, USA; [2]Department of Neurosurgery, Valley Children's Hospital, Madera, CA, USA; [3]Critical-Care Professionals International, Graham, FL, USA; [4]Department of Family Medicine, UT College of Medicine, Chattanooga, TN, USA; [5]Division of Infectious Diseases and HIV Medicine, University Hospitals Cleveland Medical Center, Cleveland, OH, USA; [6]Department of Medicine, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH, USA; [7]Center for Global Health, Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, MA, USA; [8]Division of Infectious Diseases, Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, MA, USA and [9]Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Boston, MA, USA

Abstract

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Abstract

Objective: Despite the global expansion of electronic medical record (EMR) systems and their increased integration with artificial intelligence (AI), their utilization in disaster settings remains limited, and few studies have evaluated their implementation. We aimed to evaluate Fast Electronic Medical Record (fEMR), a novel, mobile EMR designed for resource-limited settings, based on user feedback.

Methods: We examined usage data through October 2022 to categorize the nature of its use for disaster response and determine the number of patients served. We conducted interviews with stakeholders and gathered input from clinicians who had experience using fEMR.

Results: Over eight years, fEMR was employed 60 times in 11 countries across four continents by 14 organizations (universities, non-profits, and disaster response teams). This involved 37,500+ patient encounters in diverse settings including migrant camps at the US-Mexico and Poland-Ukraine borders, mobile health clinics in Kenya and Guatemala, and post-earthquake relief in Haiti. User feedback highlighted adaptability, but suggested hardware and workflow improvements.

Conclusion: EMR systems have the potential to enhance healthcare delivery in humanitarian responses, offer valuable data for planning and preparedness, and support measurement of effectiveness. As a simple, versatile EMR system, fEMR has been deployed to numerous disaster response and low-income settings.

Supplementary material. The supplementary material for this article can be found at http://doi.org/10.1017/dmp.2024.239.

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